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First Committee
15th meeting
Friday, 26 October 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Reyes (Colombia) (spoke in Spanish): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of Japan, South Africa and Colombia, draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects".

It is not my intention to describe, in this brief statement, the devastating effect that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has on the life and well-being of our peoples, on the progress and development of our nations and on international peace and security. The mere fact that small arms and light weapons cause the death of 400,000 people every year gives us some idea of the seriousness of this phenomenon.

After a long process during which it became aware of and began to examine this issue, the international community decided to convene, in July this year, the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. That Conference adopted, by consensus, a Programme of Action that embodies the political commitment of States to deal with that problem. It includes comprehensive and concrete measures to be taken at the national, regional and international levels to prevent, combat and eradicate illegal activities related to small arms and light weapons, as well as provision for a follow-up mechanism. The Conference represented the beginning of an important process to deal with the diverse and complex elements of this phenomenon.

Given this context, the delegations of Japan, South Africa and Colombia have been working with other delegations in preparing the draft resolution that we now present to the First Committee for its consideration. In the preambular part, the draft resolution recalls all of the resolutions and decisions on this issue adopted by the General Assembly in previous sessions and welcomes the consensus adoption of the Programme of Action at the Conference.

In its operative part, the draft resolution refers to measures relating to the follow-up to the Conference, including a decision to convene a conference, no later than 2006, to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action, and to convene a meeting of States on a biennial basis, commencing in 2003, to consider the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action. It also includes a request to the Secretary-General to undertake a United Nations study, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts, to examine the feasibility of developing an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons.

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The draft resolution also calls upon all States to implement the Programme of Action and encourages the United Nations, other international and regional organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to undertake initiatives to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action. It also encourages States to take appropriate national measures to destroy surplus, confiscated or collected small arms and light weapons and to submit, on a voluntary basis, information to the Secretary-General on the types and quantities of arms destroyed. It requests the Secretary-General, through the Department for Disarmament Affairs, to collate and circulate data and information provided by States on their implementation of the Programme of Action.

The draft resolution, which at this time is being sponsored by some 70 States, should be adopted by consensus and receive the sponsorship of many more States, because it represents the endorsement of and commitment to the Programme of Action on the part of the General Assembly, the most representative organ of the international community. The draft resolution brings together the commitment of States and that of the Organization in a common task.

We have completed the arduous task of defining concepts and formulating language; we have identified our differences through a long process of debate; we have taken political positions; and, finally, we have identified consensus elements. We have a map and a route. It is now imperative for us to start down the road.

We should not lose either our commitment or our momentum. That is why I would like to take this opportunity to call upon the States represented here to begin to implement the Programme of Action expeditiously. Many concrete actions can be implemented straight away, including undertaking studies to adopt or improve, as the case may be, laws, standards or administrative procedures to ensure effective control over the production, export, import, transport and re-export of small arms and light weapons; as well as the criminalizing of the illicit manufacturing, possession and storage of and trade in small arms and light weapons, so that such activities can be prosecuted; establishing national entities or bodies to coordinate the implementation of the Programme of Action; establishing or specifying national contact centres to enhance cooperation with other States in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

I have mentioned only a few of the agreed actions in the Programme of Action; I could mention many more, such as those described in paragraphs 7, 9, 12, 13, 17 and 21 of section II, which States could begin to implement immediately. These initial steps will generate the necessary energy, impetus and orientation so as to ensure that the most complex and difficult activities can be implemented.

I would also like to recall that international cooperation is a fundamental element of the Programme of Action, and that during the Conference and the preparatory process, various countries offered valuable assistance to countries that had fewer resources or were more severely affected by the problem.

The elements of that cooperation are described in section III of the Programme of Action, and include technical and financial assistance, exchange of information and resources, and capacity-building for nations, institutions and personnel. In this context, I want to stress the importance of assisting countries in defining and designing national programmes that are consistent with the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference. Such cooperation gains even greater political meaning given the current total worth of the global trade in small arms and light weapons.

In conclusion, I would like to remind the Committee how important it is for all of us to ensure that the Department for Disarmament Affairs has all the political backing and financial resources that it needs in order to fulfil the responsibilities that we have assigned to it.

Coming at the beginning of this century, the dramatic events of last month reaffirm the importance and relevance of disarmament, in particular with regard to small arms and light weapons, which are the terrorist weapons par excellence. This makes even more meaningful and timely the consensus adoption of a Programme of Action at the Conference. But we must bear in mind that, as was recognized at that Conference, we, the States, bear the primary responsibility in this matter.

Mr. Dhanapala (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs): I have requested the floor to address the Committee in connection with the draft

resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects contained in document A/C.1/56/L.47.

By this draft resolution, the Secretary-General is entrusted with a number of responsibilities. Paragraph 2 calls for providing substantive support to biennial meetings of States to consider the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action. Paragraph 9 calls for ensuring that resources and expertise are made available to the Secretariat to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action. Paragraph 10 calls for undertaking a United Nations study on the feasibility of developing an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms an light weapons. Paragraph 12 requests the Secretary-General to collect and circulate data and information provided by States on a voluntary basis, including national reports on the implementation by those States of the Programme of Action.

Given that those are new tasks entrusted to the Secretariat for which no provision has been made under section 4, regarding disarmament, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, a statement by the Secretary-General on financial implications is required and is being provided.

It should be noted that, while disarmament has been identified by the General Assembly in resolution 55/233 as one of the eight priority areas of the Organization, the Department for Disarmament Affairs is in fact the smallest department in the Secretariat, and its share of the total United Nations budget is 0.57 per cent of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. The limited resources of the Department, as reflected in the proposed programme budget, are fully utilized to carry out its mandated activities in the two main areas of concern to the international community, namely, weapons of mass destruction — in particular nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons — and conventional arms, including the current and future challenges posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and practical disarmament measures.

At the same time, new demands on the Department have been generated by a large number of diverse issues brought forth by emerging trends and developments in the field of disarmament and security. Furthermore, the Department needs to respond to the increasing number of requests for assistance in practical disarmament measures received, not only from Albania, but also from Bolivia, Cambodia, Congo-Brazzaville, Kenya and Niger. To meet all these new demands, the Department for Disarmament Affairs has requested a moderate increase in its proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, which is being considered at this moment in the Fifth Committee.

It is clear from the above that, without additional resources, the Department for Disarmament Affairs will not be able to effectively perform the new tasks entrusted to it under the draft resolution in question. In this respect, the financial statement containing proposals for additional resources is currently being prepar d by the Department and will be submitted to this Committee.

I would like to recall that, when introducing the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 in the Fifth Committee, the Secretary-General pointed out that he was proposing a budget totaling $2,519 million, which represents a 0.5 per cent real resource reduction. He noted that his proposals call for small but important increases in certain priority areas that include disarmament. The Secretary-General appealed to Member States to make sure that resources are available for what they consider to be high priority areas. I would like to reiterate the appeal of the Secretary-General and urge the Committee to support the request of the Department for Disarmament Affairs for a moderate increase in resources so as to enable the Department to effectively discharge the responsibilities entrusted to it by Member States in the field of disarmament, one of the priority areas of the Organization.

Mr. Du Preez (South Africa): I wish to join the Ambassador of Colombia in introducing draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", on behalf of the co-sponsors, presently numbered at 81.

Following the successful conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, South Africa, Colombia and Japan agreed to jointly submit a draft resolution to the First Committee in order to capture the achievements of the Conference, in particular the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its

Aspects. The draft resolution also consolidates and replaces previous First Committee resolutions on illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and on small arms sponsored, respectively, by South Africa and Japan, given the particular relevance and close association of these resolutions to the United Nations Conference.

The consensus outcome of the United Nations Conference cannot be overemphasized. In this regard, my delegation wishes to pay particular tribute to the roles played by Ambassador Reyes of Colombia, as President of the Conference, and of Ambassador dos Santos of Mozambique, as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee. South Africa is particularly pleased that Africa's leadership role ensured that the Conference successfully adopted a realistic, achievable and comprehensive approach to address the problems associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on the national, regional and global levels. The Programme of Action is a delicate balance of differing views, and provides for the first time an internationally agreed, comprehensive and achievable framework to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects based on the approach adopted by affected States.

As stated by South African delegations to this Committee, as well as to the Conference and its preparatory meetings, South Africa continues to believe that the conclusion of the Conference was not an end in itself, but merely the beginning of a long-term commitment by the international community to address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in a holistic manner that provides, at a minimum, an agreed framework for future action in this regard. The success of the Conference will be judged by the follow-up actions undertaken in the context of the decisions of the Conference, rather than by the decisions themselves. South Africa therefore looks forward to intensified international cooperation in realizing the stated objectives and measures in the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference.

The main purpose of the draft resolution is to enable the General Assembly to act upon the recommendations made by the United Nations Conference and to solidify the follow-up to the Conference. The draft resolution also draws on some of the elements taken from resolution 55/33 Q, such as the destruction of surplus, collected and confiscated small arms and light weapons and the need for States to continue to promote and strengthen regional and subregional initiatives to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

The draft resolution also encourages all initiatives to mobilize resources and expertise to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action and to provide assistance to States in the implementation of the Programme of Action. My delegation wishes to emphasize in particular the request in the draft resolution for the Secretary-General to ensure that resources and expertise are made available to the Secretariat in order to fulfil the responsibilities that States have assigned to it in the Programme of Action. In this regard, we appreciate the statement just made by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, in favour of the Secretary-General's appeal for a small increase in the budget of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. We wish to encourage Member States to give their support to this appeal.

In conclusion, I wish to extend our appreciation to the large number of delegations that have already sponsored the draft resolution, and to invite other delegations to also do so. The large number of sponsors emphasizes the strong and geographically broad-based support for the objectives of the draft resolution as embodied in the Programme of Action. I wish, however, to emphasize the importance of adopting the draft resolution without a vote, given its origin in the Programme of Action.

Mr. Noboru (Japan): My country is among the original sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", which has just been introduced by Ambassador Camilo Reyes, who served as President of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place in July.

Japan has been tackling issues related to small arms since 1995, when we first proposed a draft resolution to the General Assembly, which led to the July 2001 convening of the first United Nations Conference on small arms. My delegation highly appreciates the fact that the United Nations Conference achieved consensus on a Programme of Action which provides us with useful means for the future process of norm-setting and the implementation of activities in the

field, with the aim of resolving the serious problems caused by small arms and light weapons.

We may say that we have now entered a new phase with respect to this issue. This year, we are happy to propose a joint draft resolution, with Colombia and South Africa, to implement the outcome of the Conference, namely its Programme of Action, which suggests effective prescriptions for solving small-arms problems at the international, regional, subregional and national levels. The draft resolution includes important elements drawn from small-arms resolutions that both Japan and South Africa have proposed in past years. In combating the problems of small arms, joint efforts are imperative not only from affected countries but also from countries that possess the financial and technical means to tackle the problem.

In that sense, this joint draft resolution has a symbolic meaning in terms of cooperation between the South and the North. This draft resolution also shows the path that must be taken to meet the new challenges in the coming six years. My delegation sincerely hopes that this draft resolution will give the world community — those that suffer from small arms as well as those with serious concerns about this issue — the concrete means to implement the Programme of Action.

It is the wish of the sponsors that draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47 should be adopted by consensus.

My delegation wishes in conclusion to express its appreciation for the work done by Mr. Dhanapala and the staff of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. We fully support the content of his statement to the Committee.

Mr. Salander (Sweden): On behalf of all the other sponsoring delegations and of my own delegation, I hereby have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.43, on the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). My delegation is grateful to all the sponsoring countries for their support for the draft resolution. For the sake of brevity, I will with your permission, Mr. Chairman, refrain from reading out the names of the sponsors out loud.

Let me at the outset recall that 2001 is a very important year for the CCW Convention, as the second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention will be convened in December of this year. We are looking forward to that opportunity to further develop and strengthen this important instrument of humanitarian law.

Allow me briefly to describe the 1980 Convention. It is set up as a framework convention with four protocols annexed to it. Protocol I, adopted in 1980, deals with fragmentation weapons. Protocol II, also adopted in 1980, concerns the use on land of mines, booby traps and other devices; that Protocol was amended in 1996. A third Protocol, on incendiary weapons, was adopted 1980; and in 1995, Protocol IV, dealing with blinding laser weapons, was adopted. The Convention and its Protocols remain a highly important and integral part of international law applicable in armed conflicts.

There are no signs yet of a change in the worrying trend, which we have all witnessed since the end of the cold war, towards more civilians being afflicted by armed conflicts. That makes it all the more important for us to intensify our efforts to have the Convention and its Protocols fully implemented in order to reach the objectives of limiting the suffering of civilians and combatants alike. The draft resolution before the Committee calls upon all States to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols and to adhere to the provisions therein.

The draft resolution also reflects the development by which, under the amended Protocol II, States parties meet annually to consult and cooperate on all issues related to the operation of that Protocol. This year, the third conference will be convened on 10 December at Geneva. We encourage all States, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and interested non-governmental organizations, to participate.

The draft resolution addresses the issue of the upcoming second Review Conference for the Convention, which is to be held from 11 to 21 December 2001 at Geneva. The Review Conferences are important tools for addressing all issues concerning the Convention and its Protocols, how the operation of those instruments may be improved and how the Convention may be developed further. Currently, several proposals have been put forward by States

parties and by the ICRC for consideration at the Review Conference. Those proposals, which all aim at strengthening the Convention and its Protocols, deal with compliance procedures and mechanisms, explosive remnants of war, extension of the scope of application of the Convention and its Protocols to non-international armed conflicts, landmines other than anti-personnel mines and small-calibre ammunition.

We hope that the December Review Conference will be able to make progress and that it will be used to further strengthen the protection of civilians in conflict situations and to improve the humanitarian situation after conflicts have ended.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the work carried out during the preparatory process by Ambassador Les Luck of Australia as president-designate of the Review Conference, and also to pledge our continued full support for him. We are confident that he will bring the 2001 Review Conference to a successful conclusion. In that context, we would also like to convey our gratitude and appreciation for the important work carried out by the respective friends of Chairs on the various proposals to be considered at the Review Conference.

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.43 is intended to promote further universalization of and adherence to this very important body of humanitarian law. On behalf of all its sponsors, I wish to express our sincere hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, as was the case with a similar text last year.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): As this is the first time that I have addressed the Committee at this session, admittedly at a late stage, allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship, and also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I express my full confidence that your diplomatic skill will bring this session of the First Committee to a successful conclusion.

As in previous years, my delegation would like to speak in support of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.43, introduced by Sweden and co-sponsored by the Netherlands, on the 1980 Convention generally known as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). This Convention and its Protocols serve to reduce the unnecessary suffering of combatants, as well as of civilians. Together, they are a major instrument of international humanitarian law, in that they build on the fundamental norm of law of armed conflict, which says that military necessity in armed conflict has to be constantly set against the humanitarian objective of preventing unnecessary suffering.

It is important that rules relating to this fundamental norm of law of armed conflict are codified in international legally binding instruments. It is equally important to apply the norm to all categories of conventional weapons, munitions and methods of conducting war. We therefore attach great importance to the upcoming Review Conference of the CCW in December because it provides the parties with an opportunity to further develop and strengthen the regime on just these two accounts.

This brings me to the new topics that are on the agenda for the Review Conference. Paragraph five of the draft resolution seeks to inform delegations about what will be discussed at the Review Conference. One of these topics, explosive remnants of war, is particularly dear to me. As Friend of the Chair for explosive Remnants of War, I want to express my gratitude for the good cooperation with, and support from, all the countries with which I have had the pleasure to consult this year in Geneva. Many colleagues have shared their thoughts with me and have been very frank, which made my task much easier. I also want to thank President-designate of the Review Conference, Ambassador Les Luck of Australia, for his kind words. His able guidance has proven invaluable so far in the process, and we are confident that Ambassador Luck will steer the Review Conference to a successful outcome.

I conclude by stressing the importance of the further universalization of, and adherence to, the CCW and its Protocols. We therefore join Sweden in expressing the wish that this draft resolution be adopted without a vote.

Ms. Moules (Australia): Australia welcomes the introduction by Sweden of the draft resolution on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and acknowledges Sweden's longstanding commitment to this important Convention. We are again pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution.

Australia looks forward to the Second Review Conference of the CCW, to be held in December this year, for which Australia's Ambassador, Les Luck, has been appointed President-designate and has served as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee. The preparatory process has seen extensive consultations

between States parties and some real progress on the issues under consideration. As President-designate, Australia intends to work closely with other delegations over the coming weeks to ensure the success of the Conference. We see this draft resolution as contributing to that end.

The CCW is an important instrument of international humanitarian law, placing practical restrictions on the use of a range of conventional weapons, with the aim of limiting their impact. One of the Convention's most important attributes is its capacity to be developed to meet new challenges. The forthcoming Review Conference provides us with an opportunity to consider a range of proposals put forward by States parties to enhance the effectiveness of the Convention and assure its relevance to the nature of contemporary armed conflict.

As listed in paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, the substantive issues to be considered at the Review Conference include both proposals on weapons not already covered by the Convention, such as explosive remnants of war and small-calibre ammunition, and others aimed at strengthening or extending existing provisions on anti-vehicle mines, compliance and the Convention's scope of application.

Given that there are real prospects for further work within the context of the Convention next year and beyond, and that it is important for there to be adequate resources for this work to continue, we welcome paragraph 6 and note that it does not prejudge any outcome that may emerge from the Review Conference itself.

Australia would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the invaluable work of the Friends of the Chair for the various proposals: Ambassador Sood of India, Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands, Ambassador Jakubowski of Poland, Ambassador Draganov and later Mr. Kolarov of Bulgaria. They have energetically assisted Ambassador Luck in his role as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee and can take credit for much of the progress which has been made to date.

An equally important element of the Review Conference is the opportunity it will present for States parties to review the operation of the Convention's existing provisions and protocols. We will be encouraging States parties to utilize the Conference to identify ways in which the Convention may be more effectively implemented. Universalization of the Convention and its annexed protocols is a priority for Australia. We welcome paragraph 1 and the seventh preambular paragraph, and would encourage States which are not yet party to the Convention to accede to it at the earliest opportunity and to attend the Review Conference.

We also take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the field of international humanitarian law, particularly in the context of the CCW. The ICRC has been the driving force behind the "explosive remnants of war" proposal, and we commend it for its contribution. This initiative has prompted a growing recognition of the urgent need for the international community to take action to limit the impact of unexploded ordnance on civilian populations.

Finally, as part of our efforts to promote the Convention in the lead-up to the Review Conference, we would urge those States that have not yet done so to join us in sponsoring this draft resolution.

Mr. Keita (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) — Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo — the draft resolution on assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them, contained in document A/C.1/56/L.51/Rev.1.

The extent and persistence of the phenomenon of insecurity and organized crime linked to the illegal circulation of small arms, their illegal international transfer and their accumulation in numerous countries constitute a threat to populations and to national, regional and subregional security, and also contribute to the destabilization of States

The preamble to the draft resolution enunciates the compelling reasons for the initiatives taken at the subregional level and by the United Nations in order to better define the problem of small arms. It mentions the Secretary-General's Millennium Report, the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, and the Programme of Action of the first United Nations Conference on the

Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The operative part speaks about the activities that have been undertaken by ECOWAS, in the West African subregion, the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations in implementing this initiative. It also encourages the establishment of national commission to counter illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the involvement of organizations and civil society associations in this process through its recommendations. This measure is based on the moratorium on the import and the export of small arms, signed by our States at Abuja, Nigeria, in 1998, which has been renewed for a period of three years, beginning 1 November 2001. This seemed necessary to us in order to advance efforts for greater cooperation in stemming this scourge.

We invite the international community to continue to support the efforts made by the ECOWAS States. We thank all those countries that were kind enough to sponsor this draft resolution, the substance of which remains a subject of great concern in relation to our States' development. We welcome the cooperation with the Secretariat and the Department for Disarmament Affairs, and we encourage them to continue their efforts in support of the various initiatives.

Finally, as in previous years, we hope that the draft resolution on this subject will be adopted by consensus by the First Committee.

Mr. Nébié (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to express my support to Mali's statement made on behalf of the States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

At the beginning of this week, we considered points concerning nuclear weapons and we emphasized the dangers they represent for us and for future generations. While it is true that nuclear weapons represent a constant threat to mankind's very existence, then we must not lose sight of the fact that so-called conventional or light weapons cause great loss of human lives because they fuel armed conflicts and large-scale criminal activity. They are used constantly, their numbers are uncontrollable and their circulation and dissemination cannot be kept in check.

Burkina Faso reaffirms its full adherence to the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons. Aware and concerned that these arms contribute to the destabilization of States of the subregion and that they represent an impediment to the establishment of a climate of peace, which is vital for the socio-economic development of peoples, the Government of Burkina Faso has established a high-level authority to control the importation and use of arms. This high-level authority is presided over by the Prime Minister, our head of Government, and is composed of members of the Government, the Assembly of People's Deputies and the Chamber of Representatives.

This high-level authority is responsible for controlling all arms imports by the Government, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Economic Community of West African States moratorium, in order to prevent and hinder all illicit trade in arms on the territory of Burkina Faso. At the request of the United Nations, the high-level authority will have inventories of all types of arms warehoused in Burkina Faso. The United Nations will be able to verify any information on the territory of Burkina Faso provided by the high-level authority.

In the framework of the implementation of the ECOWAS Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, Burkina Faso has offered sites for observation zone number 2. All of these measures adopted by Burkina Faso respond to resolution 55/33 Q, adopted by the General Assembly, which is dealt with in the Secretary-General's report (A/56/296) entitled "Illicit traffick in small arms and light weapons".

Burkina Faso commends the holding in July 2001 of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The resulting Programme of Action falls short of the expectations of developing States whose desire for peace and security is evident. However, Burkina Faso considers this Programme of Action an important step towards a comprehensive solution to this phenomenon that has such a great impact on our countries.

Along these lines, the Government has established a national commission whose role is to create the necessary conditions for the implementation of measures taken at three levels — subregional,

regional and African — in fighting the illicit circulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

I wish to conclude by pointing out that my delegation is a sponsor of most of the draft resolutions that will be considered following the general debate on conventional arms. Subject to changes that might be made, my country fully supports the various draft resolutions and will spare no effort to see them adopted and implemented.

Ms. Raholinirina (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): My delegation associates itself fully with the statements made by Ambassador Camilo Reyes of Colombia and the representative of Mali in introducing draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47 and draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.51, on small arms and light weapons.

My delegation wishes to make a few comments, given the importance that my country attaches to this question.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons has become one of the major concerns of the international community, in view of the grave danger it poses to international stability and security. Curbing access to these weapons is one of the major challenges for the international community today.

The many political, economic and social consequences of the anarchic proliferation of small arms and light weapons are well known to us all. At this stage of our discussion, my delegation would simply like to stress that the great availability of small arms has established a culture of violence and impunity in many regions, particularly in Africa. These types of arms have increased the forces of repression, a source of unspeakable human suffering, particularly among women and children. Favouring a culture of the prevention of conflicts over a culture of reaction, my country considers that it is extremely important for the international community to continue to study the question of the destabilizing accumulation of small arms.

In this context, my delegation welcomes the holding in July 2001 of the first United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was a decisive phase in defining a global and concerted approach to check the destructive effects of this phenomenon.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ambassador Camilo Reyes's efforts in the holding of that important Conference. Even if small arms cannot be eradicated from one day to the next, and even if the Conference did not achieve the desired results in many respects, the universal awareness of the pressing need to put an end to their proliferation and to limit their presence marks an important point of departure for a world movement to fight against one of the most urgent problems of our century.

The measures and the recommendations covered in the Programme of Action adopted at that Conference demonstrate the firm determination of the international community to fight mercilessly the proliferation of light weapons. Given the very real, far from theoretical, danger that this scourge presents to humankind and the contemporary international system, the international community has no alternative to the rapid and complete implementation of the Programme of Action. The tragic events of 11 September, which have cast a shadow over the international environment, strengthen our conviction about this, given the very close link between the illicit trafficking of light weapons and terrorist activity.

The ease of acquisition and manipulation of such arms by individuals and non-State groups worsens the climate of insecurity in which we live today. My delegation would like to see matters of small arms held by individuals and their trade or transfer to non-State groups — on which, unfortunately, the Conference could not reach a consensus — given more attention so that we can come closer to meeting the aspirations of the international community. We feel that on a subject so closely linked to the suffering of humankind the sacred nature of human life should be taken into account, above all other considerations.

While it is true that the responsibility for putting an end to the illicit trade in light weapons primarily falls to each State, international action and cooperation play a vital role in the implementation of the Programme of Action. The success of our collective action will depend on the political will of all States to abide by their commitments contained in it, especially when it comes to the effective application of arms embargoes decreed by the Security Council. In view of the essentially humanitarian nature of the problems caused by this phenomenon, all members of the international community, including non-governmental

organizations, have to cooperate jointly to meet this challenge.

We would like to express our support for measures to be taken at the national, regional and world levels. Nevertheless, Madagascar attaches particular importance to part III of the Programme of Action, dealing with implementation, international cooperation and assistance. For my delegation, the fact that implementation has been included in this part means that without international cooperation and assistance this Programme of Action would remain a dead letter, like so many other programmes of action that have fallen into disuse.

Reiterating paragraph 14 of the preamble to the Programme of Action, my delegation stresses the urgent need for international cooperation and assistance, including financial and technical assistance, to support and facilitate efforts at the local, national, regional and global levels to tackle the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. My delegation would like to see a greater financial commitment by the international community in order to enable the United Nations to play a more active role in the implementation of the Programme of Action, in particular in developing the capacity for training on small arms stockpile management and security, as stipulated in part III, paragraph 8, as well as the development of an international instrument for tracing light weapons, as set out in part IV, paragraph 1 (c). My delegation supports the appeal made by Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala along those lines.

Since it represents the United Nations in the field, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) should play a paramount role in promoting the initiatives needed to implement the Programme of Action. In this context, we support disarmament programmes, the reintegration of former combatants into society and the voluntary surrender of arms in exchange for specific development projects. The encouraging results in this area lead us to agree with the proposal to set up a special fund within UNDP in order to support such programmes. Madagascar also asks that the Trust Fund for the Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures, set up in 1998, be given adequate resources to attain its objectives, particularly those concerning assistance to countries that are victims of the illicit trade in light weapons.

In conclusion, the delay by the international community in dealing with the proliferation of light weapons has to be made up for by the immediate implementation of the Programme of Action. It is the duty of us all to make sure that this scourge stops imposing its own laws and persecuting innocent civilians. It is in this spirit that Madagascar has co-sponsored draft resolutions A/C.1/56/L.47 and L.51, which we feel will contribute towards advancing the implementation process and freeing the world of the destructive power of light weapons.

My delegation hopes that the two draft resolutions will receive the Committee's comprehensive support and be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Halter (Switzerland): I would like to share with the Committee some of Switzerland's views and positions regarding the upcoming Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), to which we attach great importance.

I begin by thanking the President-designate, Ambassador Luck of Australia, and the Friends of the Chair on their excellent work during the preparatory process. Thanks to their efforts, States parties should be in a position to agree on a certain number of important and specific steps to improve and further develop the 1980 Convention. My country is particularly satisfied that humanitarian considerations appear to have strengthened awareness of the necessity for further progress and a more regular and structured CCW process.

Switzerland welcomes the proposals presented on issues such as compliance and the extension of the scope of the Convention and of its protocols to non-international armed conflicts, on explosive remnants of war, as well as on landmines other than anti-personnel mines, and is ready to support them. My country has submitted two proposals of its own, one on the regulation of submunitions and one on the issue of small-calibre ammunition. I thank States parties, the President-designate, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and, especially, the Friend of the Chair on the issue of small-calibre ammunition, Ambassador Jakubowski of Poland, and the Friend of the Chair on explosive remnants of war, Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands, for their support.

The Swiss initiative on submunitions has to be seen in the context of the proposal by the ICRC on explosive remnants of war, which my country supports wholeheartedly. As recent conflicts have shown, such munitions can have, after the end of hostilities, effects similar to those of anti-personnel mines, and the number of accidents caused by unexploded submunitions among civilians has reached alarming levels, surpassing even those observed in the case of anti-personnel mines.

The basic objective of our proposal, presented two years ago at the first session of the Preparatory Committee in the light of humanitarian concerns, is to provide for a self-destruction and deactivation mechanism with 98 per cent reliability for such munitions. The technology for this is already available and affordable, and has been introduced in a number of armed forces. Switzerland hopes and expects that the next Review Conference will agree on a mandate for a group of governmental experts to begin negotiation of a protocol or protocols on explosive remnants of war, including submunitions, to be completed within a time-frame that reflects the urgency of the problem.

The aim of our proposal on small-calibre ammunition is to modernize and reinforce the basic humanitarian rule, introduced at the Hague Peace Conference in 1899, that injuries caused by bullets which expand or flatten with too great a facility in the human body are excessive, and not necessary in order to achieve legitimate military objectives. To this end, my Government has developed a testing method, including a number of technical parameters, focused on the wounding potential of small arms ammunition. That potential is the crucial criterion for determining whether or not ammunition causes excessive suffering or unnecessary injury. The proposal is of a preventive nature, even if it does not hinder the development of new weapons systems that might be considered necessary from the military point of view. Switzerland hopes and expects that the next Review Conference will agree to ask a group of technical experts to pursue and deepen discussions on the best methods to deal with the question of small arms ammunition in the context of the CCW.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the offer of my country to put our testing facilities in Thun at the disposal of any country wishing to test its small-calibre ammunition and weapons systems.

Mr. Clodumar (Nauru): As Chairman of the Pacific Islands Forum Group, I am taking the floor today to make a statement on behalf of our members represented at the United Nations: Australia, Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Nauru.

The tragic events of 11 September have refocused the work of this Committee and highlighted the need for effective disarmament and arms control machinery, including in the area of conventional weapons. This work includes the pressing task of more effectively controlling the spread and availability of small arms so as to bring safety and prosperity to the lives of innocent and vulnerable people and to prevent terrorist groups from gaining access to such weapons. We must continue to do all we can, through the international disarmament machinery, to try to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms, which has a destabilizing impact on security in the Pacific island region. In our region, the possession by the wrong people of even a handful of unsophisticated weapons or ammunition can result in civilians and communities being threatened, and can affect the viability of democratically elected Governments.

In July this year, the Pacific island countries joined others in welcoming the adoption of the Programme of Action to combat the illicit trade in small arms. With about 85 practical measures to address the small arms problem, the Programme of Action is a seminal document for the Pacific island region and will have enduring value as a guide to future activities to control illicit small arms flows. The Programme of Action consolidates and strengthens the concerted efforts made by the international community over the past decade to address the devastating humanitarian and socio-economic problems caused by the illicit small arms trade. With the successful adoption of the Programme of Action, international efforts have entered a new phase. The focus now is on ensuring the full and effective implementation of that Programme.

The Programme of Action will ensure that the issue of small arms retains a prominent place on the international agenda through the inclusion of dedicated follow-up activities, such as biennial meetings of States and the review conference to assess implementation. This built-in assessment process will

be important in setting new benchmarks and ensuring that international efforts do not stagnate, but evolve to meet new challenges. In this context, we welcome the draft resolution presented by Colombia, Japan and South Africa, which gives essential backing to the implementation of the Programme.

There is close synergy between the Programme of Action and the commitment of the Pacific island countries to develop more effective small arms controls. In the promotion of the implementation of the Programme of Action, a key focus for our region will be to finalize draft model legislation for a common approach to weapons control in the South Pacific. That is now being adjusted to reflect relevant provisions of the Programme of Action. By including these elements in the model legislation, we aim to place the South Pacific region out in front in terms of implementing the Programme.

Another key focus will be the establishment of national points of contact, as well as points of contact within our subregion and appropriate regional organizations, so as to ensure that we can liaise on matters relating to the implementation of the Programme. We also plan to coordinate annual information reports to the Secretary-General on our regional progress in implementing the Programme.

In March this year, New Zealand hosted, with the United Nations, an Asia-Pacific Regional Disarmament Conference, which included a strong focus on small arms. The meeting emphasized the importance of the Nadi Framework in providing a basis for regional activities, and provided another vehicle for regional exchange and cooperation.

The Pacific Islands Forum Small Arms Workshop, hosted in May this year by Australia, further demonstrated the region's commitment to the cause. As a follow-up to the Workshop, Australia will sponsor visits by Australian Defence Force personnel to regional countries to provide technical advice on improving armoury security and accountancy systems for small arms. Other follow-up activities to build on the progress made at the Brisbane workshop are being planned, including by Japan, to reinforce the region's targeted approach to improving regional security through more effective small arms controls.

The adoption of the Programme of Action at the July Conference was a significant achievement. But its true value will come from the strength and willingness of Governments and non-governmental organizations alike to implement its provisions faithfully. Pacific island countries are fully committed to that goal.

Mr. Diallo (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): As I am speaking in the Committee for the first time this session, I would like to convey to you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau, the satisfaction of my delegation at seeing you guiding our work. We warmly congratulate you, Sir, and assure you of our full support, being convinced of your great skill and tireless devotion, which will ensure the success of our deliberations.

The bloody and sudden occurrence of acts of terrorism on 11 September dramatically illustrated the particularly aggressive nature of that scourge. Now that we are feeling less emotional, we must reflect deeply on this new dimension of the problem of the threat to international peace and security. My delegation reaffirms its strong condemnation of those terrorist attacks and once again expresses to the American people the sincere sympathy and absolute solidarity of the people of Guinea.

In the context of the item on our agenda relating to conventional weapons, my delegation is particularly interested in the sub-item on assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them.

The excellent reports that the Secretary-General has submitted for our consideration, in documents A/56/182 and A/56/296, bear witness to not only the complexity of the issue, but also the increased awareness of the problem and the relevance of the many consultations and fruitful exchanges of information that have been organized between States at the subregional, regional and international levels.

One of the first things my delegation noticed in examining those reports is that the Secretariat has made considerable efforts to meet the General Assembly's expectations regarding the implementation of resolutions 55/33 F and Q, which were adopted by consensus on 20 November 2000. A second observation is that the results achieved clearly prove that an international and integrated approach is the best strategy for combating the proliferation and illicit trade in light weapons in all its aspects.

With regard to the outbreak of numerous regional conflicts and civil wars which have entailed great costs

to many States — particularly on the African continent — it is correct to say that the issue of light weapons is one of the major challenges the international community must face today. My country belongs to a subregion that has been particularly affected by the scourge of the proliferation of light weapons.

Beset by all sorts of difficult problems resulting from the presence on its territory of hundreds of thousands of refugees who fled the wars in neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone, and having been victim to repeated rebel attacks on its southern border, Guinea has evaluated, and knows all too well, the harmful effects of easy access to, and uncontrolled use of, these weapons. Therefore it has always demonstrated real political will to contribute to strengthened regional, subregional and international cooperation to control and eradicate this danger which is destabilizing and ruining our States.

Guinea has taken on an active role in the Organization of African Unity to implement all the initiatives of the Bamako Declaration, which reflected the common position of African States on this issue. Within the framework of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), my country has also became party to the moratorium adopted at Abuja in October 1998 on the manufacturing, import and export of light weapons in West Africa. At this point, allow me to say that my delegation places great hope in the effective implementation of the recommendation contained in Security Council resolution 1343 (2001) calling on the international community to extend the necessary assistance for the implementation of the moratorium.

In accordance with the Bamako Declaration, my country has created a national commission to combat the proliferation of, and illicit trafficking in, small arms and light weapons. This body — which aims to support sustained cooperation with other national commissions in the subregion and with African and international institutions working to strengthen peace and security — has already developed a national action plan focussed essentially on fostering a true culture of peace. My delegation, which supports draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.51/Rev.1, which was introduced by Mali on behalf of the countries of ECOWAS, would like here to appeal for financial support from bilateral and multilateral partners to mobilize the necessary resources to achieve the objectives of this action plan.

The fight against the scourge of light weapons requires a comprehensive and global approach that includes civil society, which is an inexhaustible source of initiatives, experience and competence. This undeniable truth accounts for the fact that such representative non-governmental organizations as the Lansana Conté Foundation for Peace, the Guinean Council of Peace, Friendship and Solidarity and the Women's Network of the Mano River Union are today particularly active in Guinea in the pursuit and consolidation of peace in the subregion. Thanks to their dynamism and insight, and the wise support of our heads of State, civil society is in the process of writing a promising new page of history through the very positive and determined role it has played in the progress made by the Governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in their efforts to restore confidence and promote stability in the subregion.

My delegation calls for the international community to support the process under way in the Mano River Union by contributing, in particular, to putting in place the material and psychological conditions necessary for refugees to return to their countries of origin; extending tangible assistance for the implementation of measures undertaken in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; and, finally, by effectively supporting the reconstruction and development programmes.

At the end of the recent Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, my country was firmly convinced that an important step had been taken in the search for solutions to one of the major challenges confronting the international community. My delegation believes it unthinkable to stop at this point. Despite the sometimes understandable differences, we should pursue dialogue, undertake further study, increase understanding and, above all, put the common interest first in order to arrive at the necessary consensus to remaining points of contention. If all States have a clear vision of their responsibilities in the face of this common problem, we shall be able to make good progress towards peace and security for all.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): The issue of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their illicit trade has always been a matter of high priority to the delegation of Nepal. It was with this priority in mind that my delegation participated actively in the recently

concluded United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Available statistics suggest that small arms and light weapons constituted the weapons of choice in 46 of 49 major conflicts since 1990, resulting in the death of about 4 million people. Disappointingly, out of these 4 million war-related deaths 90 per cent were innocent civilians, of whom 80 per cent were women and children. This is enough to unravel the tragedy brought about by the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons around the world.

It is indeed very frustrating to learn that the world is currently awash with about 500 million small arms, enough to have one for every 12 persons, at a time when many people in the developing countries, let alone in the most vulnerable ones, are not even able to find a teacher for every 30 children or a doctor for every 30,000 people.

Although the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons has global implications, it has proved to be the biggest curse for the most disadvantaged and underprivileged countries. Increasingly frustrated unemployed and disorganized youth in poor countries tend to be easily lured by terrorist organizations to take up arms and terrorize the population, which leads to chaos and insecurity in the society.

It is our conviction that concerted efforts should be made to create a congenial environment to enable people to enjoy security without possessing guns and ammunition. The problem of the proliferation of small arms and their illicit trade is a question involving both the supply of and demand for such weapons. Curbing the unimpeded supply of small arms should necessarily be complemented by endeavours to reduce the demand for them. That requires adequate investment in developmental activities so that people can feel that they do not have to resort to violence to ensure their livelihood. Hence, the need arises for promoting the culture of peace to replace the culture of violence and crime.

His Majesty's Government of Nepal has recently launched an innovative integrated security and development programme, especially in violence-prone areas where insurgency has been on the rise for the last few years. The objective of such a programme is to promote developmental activities and to create an environment of security by countering illegally armed elements which seek to challenge law and order.

At the July United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the international community looked forward to seeing the narrowing of differences among Member States in order that they might agree on a comprehensive programme of action to fight the global menace of small arms. We joined the majority of participating nations in laying emphasis on two core issues of the problem: the unrestrained civilian possession of some categories of small arms and the supply of small arms to non-state actors. The Programme of Action adopted by the Conference failed to contain these vital provisions, to the utter dismay of the majority of delegations, even though it contains many good elements, including regional, national and global measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

We strongly feel that the international community should build on the success of the United Nations Conference on small arms and pursue attempts to strengthen the regime of combating the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons by incorporating provisions to curb unhindered civilian possession of certain small arms and their supply to entities other than the State. With this fact very much under consideration, my delegation will be supporting the draft resolution on the subject introduced before the First Committee.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, States members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), and its associated States, Bolivia and Chile, on agenda items 74 (w), entitled "Small arms", and 74 (t), entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction".

Regarding the first item, the countries on whose behalf I speak consider that the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is only a first positive step towards reducing the international proliferation of small arms in the years ahead.

When this process began, many countries, including the majority in our region, were seeking a

more daring international plan. The approved Programme of Action reflects the minimum common ground among the various positions and we therefore perceive it only as an initial step towards beginning to confront the problems caused by the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of these weapons, which affects the safety of millions of people around the world, in particular women and children.

Among the most relevant aspects of the Programme of Action, we note the following commitments: the designation of the illicit manufacture of and trade in small arms and light weapons as a crime, so that those responsible for these criminal activities can be penalized in accordance with the relevant domestic legislation; the strengthening of cooperation among States; and the establishment of follow-up mechanisms to monitor and promote the implementation of the commitments undertaken.

The United Nations Conference on small arms was the first gathering to deal with the humanitarian crises caused by easy access to arms. It is essential for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action that the United Nations and Governments pay more attention to the allocation of resources required to alleviate and prevent these crises.

At the regional level, we will focus our actions on the effective implementation of the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of And Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials and of the Model Regulations for the control of these devices.

At the subregional level, MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile have pledged to work towards the creation of a common register of vendors and purchasers of firearms, their parts and ammunition, which will contain the names of individuals or companies linked to the sale of arms and a list of ports of embarkation and/or arrival authorized to engage in trafficking in these items.

The Interior Ministers of our countries are currently working to make operative a security information exchange system for MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile. This information mechanism will make it possible to request and respond to information supplied by the respective databases. The standardization of requirements will be the starting point for a real-time network control system for firearms and ammunition through informational register nodes to be established by each country. We have also undertaken the harmonization of national legislation in this field.

In MERCOSUR, we believe that the subregional context is the main focus for the harmonization of customs legislation and regulations. We benefit from the high degree of convergence that exists in our national legislations in this field. Consequently, we have established a regional working group to harmonize legislation on firearms and ammunition in the expanded MERCOSUR, which could develop into a subregional mechanism for the implementation and follow-up of the Programme of Action.

MERCOSUR and its associated States note with satisfaction the outcome of subregional programmes and measures to reduce the demand for small arms and light weapons, to encourage their voluntary surrender in situations of excessive stockpiling and to provide greater protection to citizens in the fight against insecurity. We also consider positive the initiatives of international and non-governmental organizations that contribute, through advertising and promotion campaigns, towards a culture of peace.

MERCOSUR and its associated States have had some success in combating this problem. While recognizing the specific circumstances of each region, we feel that our experience can bring positive elements to the efforts of other subregions to achieve the same objectives.

With regard to the problem of anti-personnel mines, it is never redundant to speak about the devastating effects of these devices. Not a day goes by without the media's reporting on the nefarious and indiscriminate impact of these weapons on populations in many different parts of the world, especially as a result of their continuing lethal power after the formal end of an armed conflict.

The international community demonstrated its resolute determination to attack the problem in a collective and coordinated manner with the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which was adopted in 1997. One year before that, the great majority of Latin American countries, through the Organization of American States, launched their struggle against this scourge with the adoption of resolutions declaring the western hemisphere to be a zone free of anti-personnel mines. In 1998, the heads of State of the States members of

MERCOSUR and its associated States subscribed to a political declaration designating our subregion a zone of peace free of weapons of mass destruction. Chile and Uruguay ratified the Convention this year. Thus, the six members of MERCOSUR and its associated States have now become parties to the Ottawa Convention. We are pleased to announce that national legislations are in the process of being harmonized, in compliance with the Convention's provisions, and that we are proceeding to destroy the arsenals under our respective jurisdictions.

However, we are disappointed to note that some of the countries that are among the largest producers of anti-personnel mines are still not parties to the Convention. Once more, we call on States that have not yet done so to join the majority of the international community in this fight.

We note with satisfaction the progress achieved in mine clearance in extensive areas and in providing assistance to mine victims. We continue to believe that the efforts made in this domain are important, and we encourage all initiatives contributing to expediting these processes, which are a fundamental element in the reconstruction of post-conflict societies. In this respect, several members of MERCOSUR have done intensive work in assisting mine clearance as participants in this Organization's peacekeeping missions.

The convening of the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention is of particular importance to our region not only because significant progress was achieved relative to the previous meeting but also because the meeting was held in Nicaragua, which is one of the Latin American countries most affected by the scourge of anti-personnel mines.

The progress made on mine clearance activities, the growing number of affected countries joining the implementation and follow-up work and the sponsorship programme are all welcome developments for our subregion, as is the spirit of transparency and inclusion that has characterized the efforts to ensure compliance with the Convention. That spirit will help ensure that we maintain the dynamic and effective character of our efforts for a world free of anti-personnel mines. However, while recognizing the importance of all these efforts, we insist that it is only with the participation of the entire international community that we will be able restore security to all those exposed to this danger, of whom, regrettably, there are still too many.

Mr. Abou (Niger) (*spoke in French*): Since I am taking the floor for the first time before the Committee, I would like, on behalf of the delegation of the Niger, to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your noteworthy election. My delegation is pleased and congratulates you on the outstanding way you are carrying out the duties entrusted to you. I would also like to congratulate and convey our appreciation to the other members of the Bureau, who assist you so effectively in leading our work.

Allow me also to sincerely thank the Secretariat for the quality of the documents provided to us and to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his introductory remarks, which were both enriching and illuminating.

My delegation reiterates its condemnation of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and conveys its sympathy to the American delegation. The attacks prove that this is a question of international security; thus, our efforts to limit and control all types of weapons must be given appropriate importance and must be a subject of broadly shared, full commitment.

Thus, while we actively participate in the international community's efforts for the control, limitation and eradication of nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction, my country attaches the greatest importance to the issue of conventional weapons. Particularly on the issue of small arms and light weapons, it should be noted that the international community has very fortunately committed itself to seeking solutions to the problems of the illicit trade in and transfer of small arms and of the devastating effects of this phenomenon on the peace, security and stability of many countries, most of which are not producers of this type of arms. My country is pleased with the results achieved by the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York in July 2001, in particular the Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate this illicit trade. In this respect, my delegation fully associates itself with and supports all initiatives to ensure the implementation of the Programme of Action, as called for by draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47, introduced by the delegation of Colombia.

My delegation regularly sponsors and strongly supports draft resolutions on assistance to States for curbing the illicit trade in and collection of small arms. The draft resolution introduced by the delegation of Mali, contained in document A/C.1/56/L.51/Rev.1, has our total support. We have long abided by the recommendations of the United Nations Saharo-Sahelian advisory mission of 1994-1995. Specifically, in 1994 we decided to create a national commission on the collection and control of illicit arms.

Since the peace agreements, the dynamic of peace-building by means of the reintegration of former combatants has enabled the Niger, with the support of the United Nations system and of the group of concerned countries, to successfully pursue concrete activities to recover and destroy illicit arms.

After the "flame of peace" event, held in September 2000, a general, spontaneous movement for handing in arms enabled the collection and destruction of several hundred more weapons. However, we are aware that the public awareness campaign should be carried out on a larger scale in order to collect the maximum number of arms and to promote development activities. This is the idea behind the upcoming pilot project for the collection of illicit arms and sustainable development in N'guigmi. The project has the financial and technical support of the United Nations Development Programme and the countries participating in the group of interested States on practical disarmament measures. It will provide the opportunity to test the ability of peoples to build a shared, peaceful life based on the consensual management of resources, their adherence to the principle of disarmament within the framework of a "weapons for development" fund, and the possibility of extending this kind of activity to other regions of the country and beyond, to the entire subregion of West Africa.

To carry this out, we must suppress the demand for arms, prevent recourse to them and minimize the possibility of a resurgence of new conflicts among different communities, conflicts that are essentially rooted in problem of sharing and exploiting resources and infrastructure.

We are convinced of the need to curb the illicit trade, circulation and possession of small arms. They cause too much insecurity, which negates all attempts at development and undermines the efforts of leaders and the generous assistance of development partners.

Mr. Lint (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects". The countries of Central Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as Iceland and Liechtenstein, as European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, associate themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the adoption last July by the United Nations Conference of a Programme of Action on the fight against the illicit traffic in small arms in all its aspects. It involves measures to be taken at the national, regional and global levels, particularly in regard to export controls; the marking and registering of arms; the management of stocks and surpluses; the threefold question of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and cooperation and assistance.

The follow-up process established by the Conference is covered in draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47. Its sponsors — Colombia, Japan and South Africa — can count on the complete support of the European Union.

The problem of light weapons and small arms has many facets. There is no single solution, but progress can be made at all levels through a range of instruments.

At the global level, the fight against illicit networks depends on better identification of the supply sources. It is well known that most of the illicit weapons found in illicit networks have been manufactured legally and diverted later to supply parallel markets. Improving the ability to trace weapons and the exchange of information between States would thus be a concrete measure to fight against that phenomenon.

In that context, the European Union, which supports the Franco-Swiss initiative, also supports the proposal in paragraph 10 of the draft resolution that there be a United Nations study to examine the development of an international instrument to enable

States to identify and trace light weapons in a timely and reliable manner.

We expect a great deal from the work of the group of experts, who will be able to rely on work already done, particularly the document of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on small arms and light weapons. Furthermore, we call upon States to continue studying this question and to take initiatives, as called for in the Programme of Action.

The European Union wishes to stress the importance of strengthening international cooperation in the prevention, control and elimination of the illicit brokerage in small arms and light weapons.

The European Union and its member States are determined to cooperate actively with other countries to implement the Programme of Action in all its aspects and to provide the necessary assistance within that framework.

The meeting of States in 2003 will give us the opportunity to take stock for the first time of the progress made in implementing the Programme of Action and to identify new means to combat the illicit trade in light weapons in all its aspects. We will thus be able to complete and improve the Programme of Action at an appropriate time.

Mr. Dzundev (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I have the honour, on behalf of the sponsoring States and my delegation, to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.41 on the maintenance of international security — good-neighbourliness, stability and development in South-Eastern Europe. The original sponsors have been joined by other countries, so that the full list is: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. My delegation is grateful to all sponsoring countries for their support for the draft resolution.

This draft resolution is a follow-up to resolution 55/27. It addresses the complexity of the issues of security, disarmament, stability and cooperation, and reflects the developments in the region over the previous year. Its thrust is to further promote a culture of good-neighbourliness, cooperation and integration, and to identify the measures and efforts that may lead to the further stabilization of South-Eastern Europe and the easing of threats to its security. In this context, it must be underlined that the primary responsibility for the region's future rests with the States themselves, but also that the initiatives of international organizations and all other regional organizations have a significant role to play. No less important is the full observance of relevant international instruments.

The region of South-Eastern Europe has undergone many positive changes that have brought about a new climate of cooperation among States, but it continues to face various challenges that threaten its overall security and stability. The most encouraging positive developments are intensified cooperation among the countries of the region and their further rapprochement with the European Union, which will pave the way for lasting stability and democratic and economic development in the region. The United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union, the Stability Pact and other regional organizations and initiatives have further contributed to this new positive climate.

Unfortunately, some parts of the region have been negatively affected by extremism in its worst forms, including terrorist acts that are closely connected to various forms of organized crime and that require a strong national and regional response in combating it. In this context, the issue of small arms and light weapons, one of the main destabilizing factors in the region, also requires concerted regional efforts.

However, there are some positive developments in the area of arms control and confidence-building measures. One is the conclusion of the document on article V of annex 1B of the Dayton Peace Accords regarding regional arms control and related confidence-building measures.

Slight changes have been made in the text. In the sixth preambular paragraph "remarkable" has been replaced by "significant". Furthermore, in paragraph 2, after the phrase "to prevent conflicts" the words "in South-Eastern Europe" have been inserted. In

paragraph 3, in the last line, the words "and international" have been deleted. In paragraph 10, in the second line, after "European Union" the words "other contributors" have been inserted. The last change is in paragraph 15, where the phrase "in some parts of" has been inserted before "South-Eastern Europe". The changes have been submitted to the Secretariat.

In conclusion, on behalf of the sponsors, I express the hope that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Addressing the Committee for the first time, my delegation takes this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman, and to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

I have the honour of introducing the draft resolution entitled "Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Question in Central Africa", contained in document A/C.1/56/L.2, on behalf of the following countries: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe, Zambia, and, of course, my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Since it was set up in 1992 by the Secretary-General in order to encourage arms limitation, disarmament, non-proliferation and development in the Central African subregion, the Standing Advisory Committee has taken measures to strengthen confidence and the development of security cooperation between its member States. Under its aegis, a non-aggression pact and a mutual assistance pact were signed between the member States. The members have also set up a mechanism to promote, maintain and consolidate peace and security in Central Africa called the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa. The Standing Advisory Committee has organized various subregional conferences dealing with security matters of concern to Central Africa, such as the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa, held in N'Djamena, Chad, in October 1999, and the Subregional Conference on the Question of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Central Africa, held in Bujumbura, Burundi, in August 2000. These meetings enabled us to adopt pertinent recommendations on ways and means to find appropriate solutions to the problems under examination.

Thus, the Standing Advisory Committee has done some particularly useful work since it was set up, and it therefore deserves the full support of the international community, and of our Committee in particular. This is the thrust of the draft resolution that we have the honour to introduce today.

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.2 takes up practically the same matters dealt with by the corresponding resolution last year. Its only new elements reflect the activities that the Advisory Committee has undertaken since the last session. The draft resolution reaffirms support for efforts aimed at promoting confidence-building measures at regional and subregional levels in order to ease tensions and conflicts and to further peace, stability and sustainable development in Central Africa.

The draft resolution notes with satisfaction the progress made by the States members of the Standing Advisory Committee in implementing the programme of activities for the period 2000-2001. It also emphasizes the importance of providing the States members of the Standing Advisory Committee with the essential support they need to carry out the full programme of activities which they adopted at their ministerial meetings.

I wish to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the valuable assistance they have constantly given to our Committee. I would also like to express my gratitude to countries and institutions that have contributed to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, thus enabling it to continue its activities to promote peace and security in Central Africa. I would also like to extend my thanks to the members of the First Committee for the support that they have unceasingly given to draft resolutions on the activities of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. We hope that they will continue to do this and will support draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.2 so that it will be adopted by consensus, as have those of past years.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have asked for the floor to introduce the draft resolutions contained in documents A/C.1/56/L.27 and A/C.1/56/L.28. First, on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Colombia,

Egypt, Fiji, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Turkey and my own delegation, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.27, entitled "Regional disarmament".

International security and disarmament need to be pursued at both the international and regional levels. While international disarmament measures are vital, in most instances security and disarmament can be most effectively promoted at the regional level.

As the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.27 notes, guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security were adopted by the Disarmament Commission in 1993. These guidelines remain relevant in the present day to promote regional disarmament in the conventional and non-conventional fields.

It is now quite evident that in most of the areas of tension and potential conflict — the Middle East, South Asia, North-East Asia and Central Asia — the regional approach could offer a most effective basis to promote disarmament and enhance security. The draft resolution notes the recent proposals for disarmament at the regional and subregional levels and expresses the conviction that endeavours to promote regional disarmament, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region, and in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments, would enhance the security of all States.

This draft resolution therefore stresses the need for sustained efforts, affirms that global and regional approaches to disarmament complement each other and calls States to conclude agreements, wherever possible. It welcomes the initiatives towards disarmament, non-proliferation and security undertaken by some countries at the regional and subregional levels and supports and encourages confidence-building measures.

The adoption of this draft resolution will encourage the countries concerned to pursue endeavours for regional disarmament and help to strengthen regional and international security. The sponsors hope that, like last year's resolution on regional disarmament, the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.27 will be adopted without a vote.

Now I would like briefly to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.28, entitled "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels", on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Fiji, Germany, Italy, Nepal, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and my own delegation.

The draft resolution is aimed at promoting disarmament endeavours in an area that so far has not received due recognition in international disarmament forums: the pursuit of conventional disarmament at the regional and subregional levels. The draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.28 outlines, in its preambular part, several vital principles and precepts relating to the issue, including the crucial role of conventional arms control in peace and security; that threats to peace and security in the post-cold-war era arise mainly among States located in the same region or subregion; that the preservation of a balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest level of armaments would contribute to peace and stability; that agreements to strengthen regional peace and security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces is a desirable objective, that militarily significant States and States with larger military capabilities have a special responsibility in promoting such agreements for regional security; and that an important objective should be to prevent the possibility of military attack launched by surprise and to avoid aggression.

The preamble of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.28 also notes with particular interest the initiatives taken in various regions, including among a number of Latin American countries, and the proposals for conventional arms control in South Asia, and recognizes the relevance and value of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which it describes as a cornerstone of European security.

The operative part of the draft resolution decides to give urgent consideration to the issue of conventional disarmament at the regional and subregional levels, and requests the Conference on Disarmament, as it did last year, to consider the formulation of principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements.

This year, a new paragraph 3 has been added, which requests the Secretary-General, in the meantime, to seek the views of Member States and to submit a

report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

The sponsors express the hope that draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.28 will be adopted without objection.

Ms. Frøholm (Norway): I have the honour to take the floor to address draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47, on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. Norway welcomes the Programme of Action agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July. The next step must be to confirm the Programme of Action in the General Assembly and to launch the follow-up process so that commitments made in July can be quickly translated into action through concrete follow-up and implementation at the national, regional and global levels. We fully support draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47, which was presented to the Committee this morning by Colombia, Japan and South Africa, and we compliment them on their work in preparing the text.

To be successful in our efforts, we need to mobilize Governments, civil society, the United Nations and its agencies, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations. We welcome the Security Council's involvement and the decision to request a report by September 2002 on how the Council can help prevent and combat the illicit trade in small arms. We need an integrated and comprehensive approach to deal with the complex and multifaceted problems caused by the proliferation and misuse of these weapons. We must address all aspects of the small-arms problem and focus on the link between licit and illicit flows. A United Nations feasibility study on an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit arms should be undertaken as soon as possible, and governmental experts should be nominated in the course of this year.

We support the Franco-Swiss initiative on tracing and marking. We also want to work with interested Governments and non-governmental organizations to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation on brokering.

In our national efforts, we will give high priority to assisting affected countries and regions. A comprehensive and integrated approach must span arms control and human security and development. The demand for and misuse of small arms are clearly related to problems of poverty, underdevelopment, lack of security and injustice. We must address the root causes of conflict and violence and place small-arms action firmly in the context of comprehensive peace-building and human development.

We believe very firmly in the importance of security-sector reform for development, and in practical disarmament and small-arms measures, as part of the security-sector approach and in the wider perspective of human security and development.

We call on delegations also to support draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.39, on consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures.

Finally, we call on all Governments to consider making contributions to the United Nations Development Programme trust fund for small-arms reductions.

Mr. Jakubowski (Poland): As this is the first time I have addressed the Committee this year, allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly. The Polish delegation is confident that you will bring to our deliberations your proven experience and wisdom on matters of disarmament and international security, and that you will continue to preside over our deliberations with balance and vision and will facilitate the successful completion of our tasks. As a Pole, I am particularly pleased to see in the Chair the representative of a nation with which we have been so closely linked for centuries. Our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

Let me reiterate Polish solidarity with the people and the Government of the United States. Poland shares in the grief and pain for those who lost their lives in the horrible terrorist attacks of 11 September.

In the light of those events, we have to take a fresh and careful look at each and every field, each and every niche, in the domain of disarmament. They are certainly related to our subject for today. The combination of a sick mind and conventional weapons can bring about destruction of massive proportions. I should like to offer just a few remarks, as we note the growing importance of multilateral activities, both regional and global, in the area of conventional arms control and disarmament. Over the course of several

years, there have been a number of promising developments.

We have associated ourselves with the statement of the European Union on small arms, so I wish to add only a few words.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has become one of the greatest challenges to international security in the twenty-first century. There is a clear link between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and such threats as terrorism, trafficking in drugs and people, and organized crime. Poland has actively participated in work on the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. We believe that the Programme of Action adopted in July at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, are interconnected. Therefore, we value the fact that this was reflected in the Programme of Action of the Conference.

It is worthy of note that growing attention is being paid to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). With the Review Conference of the Parties to be held in December this year, we have an opportunity to further strengthen the principle of reducing the human suffering that results from warfare. We welcome the progress on the preparatory work that has been made in Geneva under the leadership of Ambassador Luck of Australia. We now have a strong framework for a successful Review Conference. Poland attaches great importance to the Convention, and shares the view that it is a unique instrument in which legitimate military needs as well as humanitarian values and concerns can be and indeed are addressed simultaneously.

Strongly driven by humanitarian concern over the death and suffering caused by the worldwide landmine crisis, Poland is in favour of reducing the deadly threat caused by mines other than anti-personnel mines. Hence, we believe that the establishment of minimum detectability standards for such mines and the imposition of the requirement that these mines, when delivered remotely, must be fitted with self-destruct, self-neutralization and self-deactivation features will fully serve the goals of the CCW Convention. The relevant technology is available. For that reason, Poland, with a number of other countries, joined in sponsoring the proposal in that regard put forward by the United States and Denmark.

With regard to the issue of explosive remnants of war, Poland supports the establishment of a group of governmental experts. We believe that the group will move swiftly towards a legal solution. We understand the importance of this problem — and for good reason. Unexploded remnants of war, left from the Second World War, are still present in my country. For more than 50 years, Poland has continued to clear its national territory, which has been contaminated by every possible kind of munition. Between 1945 and 1956, 14 million landmines and 58 million munitions, bombs and other explosives were detected and destroyed. Over the past 40 years, a further 36,000 anti-tank mines and 10,669 air bombs; more than 177,000 artillery shells and 4 million rounds of ammunition; and a number of sea mines, have been detected and destroyed. We have accumulated a great deal of experience, and we are now sharing it with others. Some 700 Polish soldiers have already been involved in humanitarian clearance as part of peacekeeping operations in several regions of the world.

In the course of the preparatory process for the Review Conference, significant attention has been paid to the Swiss proposal regarding small-calibre ammunition, which is aimed at reinforcing the Hague Declaration of 1899. I welcome the apparent resolve to further strengthen the humanitarian dimension of the CCW and to continue, at an expert level, work focused on the wounding potential of small-arms ammunition. I hope that this work will enable us to arrive at an agreed position and, subsequently, to bring the issue to the attention of the group of governmental experts.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I would like to say that, on Monday, 29 October, in the afternoon, we will continue with phase II. We have also planned two meetings for Tuesday, 30 October. There are no speakers on the list for the afternoon meeting on Tuesday, 30 October. We will therefore continue with our work on phase II on Monday, and complete it on Tuesday morning. It is my intention to proceed to the third phase of the work of

the Committee on Tuesday, 30 October, in the afternoon, instead of on 31 October as originally scheduled.

Document A/C.1/56/CRP.3 has been distributed to all delegations in order to facilitate the third phase of our work. As the Committee may recall, that Chairman's paper arranges all draft resolutions and decisions in appropriate clusters. I ask delegations to bear that paper in mind as a useful tool as we proceed to phase III; it is a yardstick by which we can organize our work efficiently.

I would also like to state that, in the process of grouping the various draft resolutions, I have applied the most logical and practical criteria available, at the same time making efforts to group, to the extent possible, all draft decisions and draft resolutions according to related subject matter. Again, I stress that the main reason for preparing that paper was to enable the Committee to carry out its work in phase III in the most effective way.

As I mentioned at the previous meeting of the Committee, it is my intention, with the cooperation of members, and on the basis of past practice and precedents, to move from one cluster to another upon the completion of action on each cluster. Nevertheless, I hope that, while following this procedure and moving from one cluster to another, the Committee will maintain the desired degree of flexibility.

I also want to draw the attention of the Committee to something that is repeated at every General Assembly session but is useful to recall: during this third phase — the decision-making stage — delegations will first have the opportunity to introduce revised draft resolutions with regard to any particular cluster. That will happen as we start phase III: members will have the opportunity to introduce revised draft resolutions relating to any of the clusters. Subsequently, however, delegations wishing to make general statements or comments other than explanations of vote on the draft resolutions listed in a particular cluster, will have an opportunity to do so. They will be able to make general statements or comments on a given cluster — except, of course, in the case of explanations of vote.

Delegations will be able to explain their vote or position on a given draft resolution before or after a decision is taken, according to their preference, if they wish to do so. In accordance with the rules of procedure, sponsors of a given draft resolution are not permitted to make statements in explanation of vote on that draft resolution. Sponsors are allowed to make only general statements on a draft at the beginning of the discussion of the particular cluster.

It is my intention to follow the procedure that I have just outlined — which should not come as a shock, because it is the usual practice that has always been followed in this Committee — when we start phase III, i.e. taking action on draft resolutions submitted under all agenda items.

In the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Committee and the Chair will proceed accordingly.

On Monday there will be one further meeting devoted to phase II. On Tuesday morning, we will convene the last meeting for phase II, and the third phase will begin on Tuesday afternoon.

At this point, I would like to announce that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday at 3 p.m. in this Room.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to inform the Committee that the following countries have become sponsors of the following draft resolutions: draft resolutions A/C.1/56/L.7 and L.10, Mongolia; L.15, Brazil; L.28, Belarus; L.34, Liberia; L.40, Mongolia; L.43, Monaco and Mongolia; L.45, Burundi, Ethiopia, Honduras, Kenya, Lebanon, Namibia, the Niger, Pakistan, the Philippines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Zambia; L.47, Bolivia, Ecuador, Georgia and Monaco; and L.50, Viet Nam.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.